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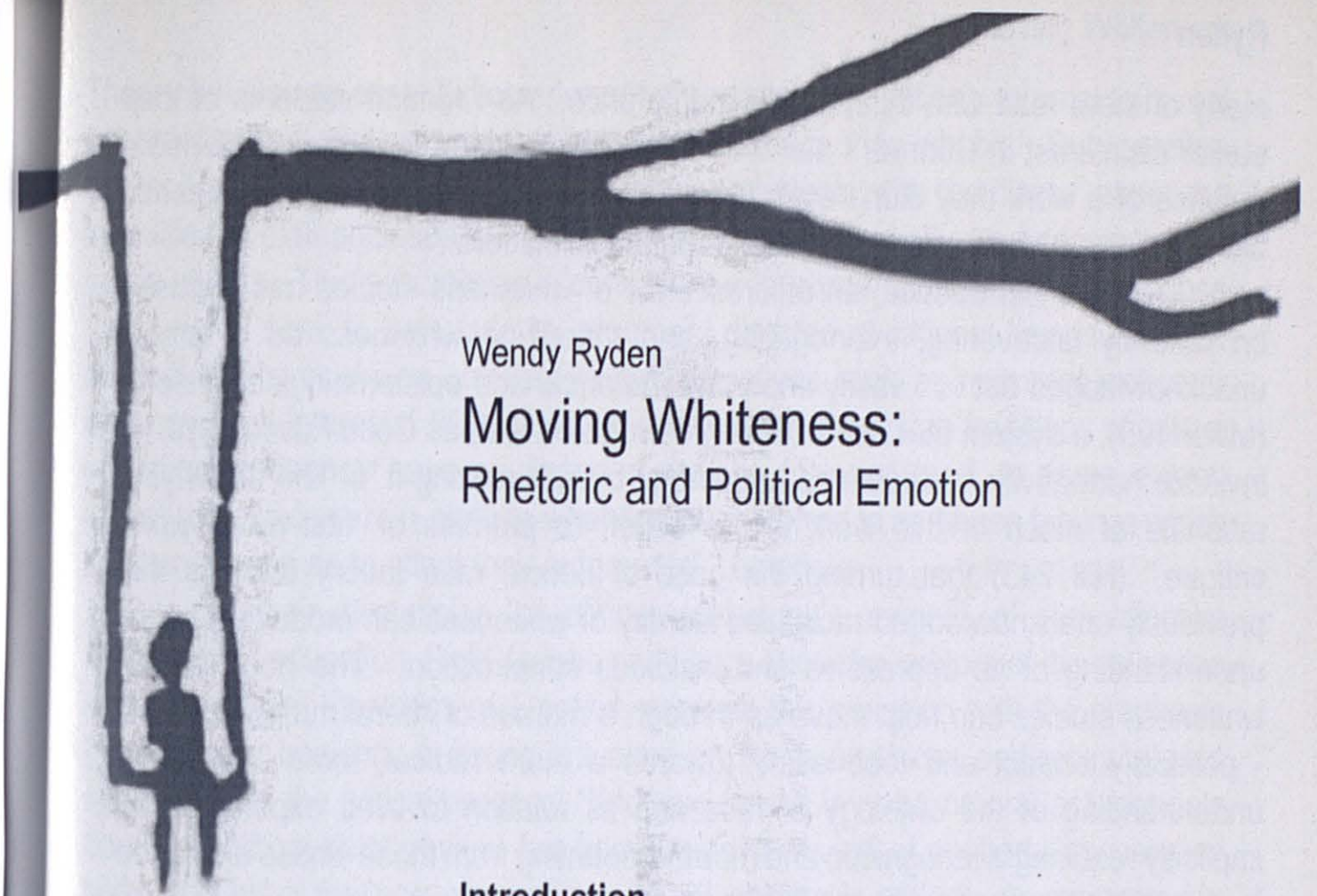
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Wendy Ryden

Moving Whiteness: Rhetoric and Political Emotion

Introduction

When I teach *Heart of Darkness*, I often introduce students to Chinua Achebe's well-known "An Image of Africa," an essay in which Achebe denounces Conrad as a "thorough-going racist" and dismisses his liberal ideology with its effective erasure of Africa. Upon reading Achebe's argument, many white students will invariably try to undermine his indictment by claiming he is applying later moral standards to earlier work or that Conrad's intentions were not to write a racist book (even if he ended up doing so). All of these arguments, which indeed have intellectual merit, can be engaged and countered - as Achebe does - and I ask students to read this essay precisely because of the questions Achebe's critique raises about liberalism as well as narrative theory. But it occurs to me that such intellectual sparring, the very stuff of academic exchange, may be beside the point. To ignore the emotional dimensions of this discussion, I think, is certainly to miss a good portion of what the argument may really be about: the *emotional stake* that these students have in their whiteness. For what strikes me is how fervent and invested they become in defending a book that, prior to seeing Achebe's essay,

many of them read with thinly veiled indifference. As I remind students of their earlier disinterest in Conrad, I ask them how they account for so impassioned a defense of a work they didn't even like. The question, unanswerable it seems, often draws embarrassed smiles and shrugged shoulders.

In the last decade, an efflorescence of whiteness studies has "focused on race by uncovering, interrogating, and theorizing whiteness as a largely unacknowledged but . . . vastly important rhetorical and epistemological system" (Miller 199), a system that needs to be interrogated lest, as Coco Fusco says, its invisible normativity "redouble its hegemony by naturalizing it."¹ The underlying rationale of much of this work is the belief, "a premise of 'first-wave' white critique," (Hill 243) that turning the gaze of critical race theory towards this previously unacknowledged racialized identity of whiteness can produce a better understanding of its oppressive and insidious construction. The hope is that whiteness studies can help move us through a morass of liberal multiculturalism - politically correct and toothless - towards a more radical, more "disturbed" understanding of the ontology of race and its relation to lived experience by implicitly requiring a recognition and moral accounting from those whose existence is steeped in the phenomenon of whiteness.²

But how will such a project proceed? Specifically, how will we move from acknowledgment or visibility to praxis and change? In *After Whiteness*, Mike Hill tells us that "It has become a common enough charge that the spate of work that amassed on whiteness throughout the 1990's has served to exacerbate the problem of white hegemony that it only pretended to unmask" and that this has happened "contrary to . . . best intentions" (16). If whiteness studies and their contribution to critical pedagogy's anti-racist agenda have not lived up to expectations, what exactly has gone wrong? More specifically, what is the nature of the gap that exists between awareness and change?

Jessie Daniels implicitly poses such questions about whiteness studies and the scholars and writers who produce it when she observes that "The difficulty I see with what the authors offer in terms of praxis is that they rely on an appeal to the reasonableness and well-intentioned nature of whites - who will see that this [whiteness] is a waste and stop. . . . *Their [the authors'] own evidence, however, contradicts this...*" (203, emphasis added).³ The appeal to reason and good intentions that Daniels so skeptically wonders about may well be problematic not only for discussions of racism but, in general, for the approach that critical pedagogy has adopted in its efforts to focus education on social change. Starting from the assumption that the classroom is never an ideologically neutral space, the critical or radical pedagogue seeks to disrupt hegemonic discourses precisely by drawing attention to their potent normativity, a goal shared in common with critical race theorists' insistence on race-conscious intervention. As such, the critical study of whiteness is not only an inevitable outgrowth of Critical Race

Theory but also an essential component of liberatory education's attempt to reveal to students how whiteness looms large in the worlds they inhabit.⁴ But too often the tacit operative assumption is that arming students with the "facts" about the inequities of their societies will give them the necessary motive to become critical social agents. This assumption is consistent with a view of political theory whose "proponents seek to persuade by argument directed at rational beings and see political actors as driven chiefly by rational motives such as norms of justice or economic self-interests" (Koziak 4). In effect, North American traditions of critical or radical pedagogy have privileged a rhetoric of *logos* (and, to some extent, *ethos*) while giving short-shrift to what Aristotle referred to as "those feelings which so change men as to affect their judgments" - emotions.

In their discussion of critical pedagogy's neglect of the affective dimension of education, Dale Jacobs and Laura Micciche, editors of the collection *A Way to Move: Rhetorics of Emotion*, contrast this omission with the emphasis Paulo Freire, ironically a strong influence on North American pedagogy, places on emotion in the critical process: "Knowing for me is not a neutral act, not only from the political point of view, but from the point of view of my body, my sensual body. It is full of feelings, of *emotions*. . ." (6, emphasis added). As suggested in Jesse Daniels' observation about the difficulty of disrupting whiteness, attempts to confront white racism often evolve around a *logos*-centered epistemology devoid of the emotional considerations that Aristotle and Freire appear to identify as essential to the project of human knowing. Christine Sleeter sums up this approach as one where: "Prejudice and misperception can be corrected by providing information. With more information, white people will abandon racist ideas and behaviors and (presumably) work to eliminate racism" (158). According to Sleeter, such "psychological" conceptions are flawed because, lacking in structural analysis, they stem from a liberal premise that assumes racism is an illogical discourse fixable through the rationality of individuals. Such approaches do not recognize that "White people's commonsense understandings of race" represent their group's "vested interest in justifying their power and privileges" (158).

Many researchers and theorists such as Sleeter point to the inability of white people to interrogate the racism inherent in whiteness or to effect any change in white hegemony. Sleeter concludes, and perhaps quite rightly, that little can come from this line of endeavor, for she sees the supposed irrationality of whiteness as being what Seibel-Trainor describes as white people's very "rational understanding of their socioeconomic interests" (632). Janine Jones also acknowledges the rationality of whiteness: "If a white person applies rules in some special way when it comes to blacks it is because his reason is well intact. For his way of reasoning may help him achieve his practical goals, which are of primary interest to him, even if it falls short of his ideals" (65). Thus the invisibility of

whiteness is no mere oversight but instead a hegemonic technology of "ignorance" where "white discourse," in "refusing to name and undo its own innocence . . . silently screams its collusion in perpetuating racist discourse" (Curry 15). But despite its "rationality," whiteness does indeed contain an affective dimension, apparent and often remarked, but perhaps insufficiently theorized. bell hooks, for example, mentions the "disbelief, shock, and rage," the "amazement" white people evince when their whiteness is critically scrutinized ("Essential" 20-1). She uses the phrase "deep emotional investment" to describe the attitude of whites towards maintaining the "mystery" of whiteness.

A view of whiteness as "rationally emotional" is consistent with ongoing scholarship that refigures emotion from private, isolated, internal event to cultural discourse that is normative and that is subject to rhetorical analysis. Although often popularly regarded as solely an idiosyncratic or personal physiological response, emotion in contemporary scholarship has been understood as "social, cultural, political and historical" (Abu-Lughod and Lutz 18), conceivable not only in terms of interiority but "as a form of social action that creates effects in the world, effects that are read in a culturally informed way by the audience for emotion talk" (12) and that contain "power relationships otherwise partially concealed" (Stearns and Stearns 14). Emotions are a language through which we communicate and make meaning with ourselves and with others; emotions are products and vehicles of culture. Understandable as social and discursive phenomena, they are very much part of the domain of rhetoric, and not merely as poor adjuncts to reason. Indeed, the re-examination of classical conceptions of emotion, such as Aristotle's theory of emotional rhetoric, suggests a blurring of boundaries between *logos* and *pathos* where the latter "has a sort of rationality" (Walker 81) and that "the moods of rational assent and dissent . . . emerge from within existing affects" (83).

My contention is that a rhetorical study of emotion is integral to critical pedagogy's efforts to disrupt "the vastly important rhetorical and epistemological system" that critical race theory has shown whiteness to be. Coupling the emerging rhetoric of emotion with whiteness studies' insights into racism can help us map the "mystery" of whiteness as it structures social consciousness and perhaps, ultimately, provide a means for rhetorical "restructuring," as we take into account the political dimension of our emotional responses. As Lynn Worsham has argued, "the work of decolonization must occur at the affective level, not only to reconstitute the emotional life of the individual but also, and more importantly, to restructure the feeling or mood that characterizes an age" (216). A look at what Henry Giroux has called a "pedagogy of whiteness" will demonstrate how a study of emotion as a rhetorical system can abet the efforts of Giroux and other critical pedagogues.

In his promotion of "a pedagogy of bafflement that takes whiteness and race as an object of serious debate and analysis," Giroux acknowledges

the reluctance of white students to engage in such processes and advocates an examination of resistance "for the knowledge it yields, the possibilities for exploring its silences and refusals" (308) and further suggests that students "be offered a space marked by dialogue and critique in which they can engage, challenge, and rearticulate their positions by analyzing the material realities and social relations of racism" (309). His last remarks epitomize the important and laudable goals and methodologies of the radical educator. And Giroux acknowledges the emotional dimension of the task: "making white students responsive to politics of racial privilege is fraught with the fear and anger that accompany having to rethink one's identity" and that we need to engage students in "fostering less a sullen silence or paralyzing guilt and more a sense of outrage" (309). Despite this acknowledgment of the crucial role of emotion in political and ethical development, Giroux's pedagogy implicitly steers us away from attention to affective response when he suggests that the way to navigate this emotional minefield is by "(m)aking whiteness rather than white racism the focus of study" in order to handle the outpouring of emotion that ensues when white privilege is confronted. What he calls "an important pedagogical strategy" is effectively a strategy of emotional diffusing in favor of *logos*-based analysis where the emotions of whiteness are side-stepped through seemingly objective intellectual engagement. In other words, a rational study of whiteness will lead to the dismantlement of this irrational discourse. Despite his deeming it important, Giroux intuits the limitations of this strategy when he calls for "more theoretical work . . . to be done to enable students to appropriate the tools necessary for them to politicize whiteness as a racial category without closing down their own sense of identity and political agency" (310). My argument is that studying emotional discourses and equipping students with a rhetoric of emotion may be an important step in helping them acquire those "tools" to which Giroux refers.

Emotional Rhetoric

The reassessment of classical rhetoric that has expanded our understanding of the rational and its relation to affect draws into question the validity of the academic tendency to ignore the role of emotion in intellectual formation and exchange. In the ancient rhetorical traditions, *pathos* was considered a crucial area of study, although, as Richard Katula acknowledges in his discussion of Quintillian, "Modern readers may raise a question regarding the 'ethics' of emotional appeal" (12) when it is seen as a means of manipulation to distract from *logos*-based truths.⁵ The question (which may be asked of persuasion in general) is how the role of emotions is conceived in rhetoric. When Cicero, for example, states in *De Oratore* that "it is impossible for the listener to feel indignation, hatred or ill-will, to be terrified of anything, or reduced to tears of compassion unless all those emotions . . . are visibly stamped or rather branded

on the advocate himself" (II, 189), he might be promoting a practical but superficial emotional rhetoric, in which rhetors opportunistically acquire emotional literacy for the sake of persuading others. But when Cicero adds that "I give you my word that I never tried . . . to arouse indignation or compassion, either ill-will or hatred . . . without being really stirred myself," he begins to ascribe a more profound role to emotions. Instead of mere trickery or deception, we have instead the beginnings of a theory of deep empathy akin to method acting that provides the basis for humanistic growth through role playing: "I did those things approved by yourself, Crassus—not by way of technique, as to which I know not what to say, but under stress of deep emotion and indignation . . ." (II, 195). Not merely a vehicle for winning arguments, feeling in this construction becomes a significant way of being in and understanding the world.

As mentioned above, recent scholarship on Aristotle also helps us reconfigure the rhetorical significance of emotion. Rather than merely a necessary evil in the art of persuasion, the study of pathetic appeal had larger implications for Aristotle, according to Ellen Quandhal. Building on the work of other scholars in this area, Quandhal asserts that "Aristotle is an indispensable predecessor for acknowledging and working with . . . emotion in rhetorical education" (11). She further derives from Aristotle's rhetorical treatment of emotions that they "have their vitality in an ethical sphere" (19). Indeed, "emotions play a necessary role in good moral judgment" (Koziak 15). This last idea concerning the ethical nature of emotions, as well as Stearns' and Stearns' insight into the power relations that are embedded in emotional discourse, provides a basis for analyzing the emotions of whiteness and their significance to the discursive structures of racism. From this perspective, rather than merely "private" and therefore unchartable and irrelevant, the emotional experience of whiteness is, on the contrary, socially shaped and experienced. These emotions, I suggest, can help us "find" those structures of whiteness and examine the way we perpetuate them rhetorically. Furthermore, a consideration of emotional ethics may offer alternatives to *logos*-based strategies for divestment from whiteness.

Tracing Emotional Whiteness

In the preface to *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison's meditation on whiteness in literature, she conjectures about French writer Marie Cardinal's literary treatment of her mental breakdown in the book *Les Mots Pour Le Dire*. Morrison notes that, according to Cardinal, her first panic attack was precipitated by a Louis Armstrong concert, an experience that "tore at the nerves" (viii). Morrison theorizes that for Cardinal the feeling that she is going to die is uncannily related to Armstrong's blackness and the jazz that he performs that evening; that Armstrong and his music as Other become the projected repository of darkness necessary for Cardinal's whiteness. The confrontation with her inability to recognize this

construction, Morrison muses, in part produces the emotional response of terror. In Morrison's analysis, then, whiteness and emotion are inextricably linked even though the link goes unanalyzed in the account that Cardinal offers in her autobiographical narrative.

While Morrison is frankly speculative here, her ponderings are, as they are intended, heuristically useful, especially in suggesting the way emotions can point us to invisible power structures of whiteness embedded in the emotional responses of individuals performing as social agents. For example, consider the following scenario where emotional whiteness manifests itself: an episode from the TV show *COPS* features an unruly, drunk white man being arrested. During the course of the arrest, the man becomes increasingly angry at what he perceives to be rude treatment by his captors, and he utters the phrase, over and over, "but I'm a white man; I'm a white man." Implied in the proclamation, of course, is the idea that his whiteness should preclude the abuse he is receiving at the hands of the authorities. He exhibits the amazement and rage that hooks reminds us occurs when white privilege is challenged. His emotional response, his shocked disbelief, points us to the invisible privilege of whiteness, which the man (who could not count on the privilege of being middle-class) was assuming as his due. In this case, whiteness fails to grant him the protection he expects it to carry, and, as a result, this usually unarticulated (and perhaps unarticulable) privilege *had* to be articulated and thus made visible in a way that it often is not, precisely and ironically because the privilege turns out to be a chimera. The comic absurdity of his utterances becomes understandable when we consider that the failure of the assumed privilege and the crisis it produced culminated in an outrage that is not unlike the anger members of any dominant group may experience when a tension is created in their own sense of entitlement, a situation that often occurs in our college classrooms when students encounter texts that call into question the unexplored status quo.

Indeed, this notion of privilege is a stumbling block in the classroom, when working class white students become resentful while listening to someone speak about the supposed benefits of their whiteness as, for example, Charles Gallagher describes in his study of white students who assert their whiteness in reactionary ways in multicultural educational institutions. Often such students perceive themselves as struggling and economically disadvantaged (and indeed they are), and they respond to the suggestion that they are privileged with skepticism and anger, an emotion that can be understood as being about the *failure* of the *expected* privilege which whiteness promises as its entitlement but does not always deliver. White people, resistant to and untrained in materialist, class-based understandings of their society, see themselves as the rightful beneficiaries of an American system of meritocracy. In other words, as white people, they fully expect to achieve social-economic stability when they follow the

"rules" of earnest industriousness; the unwritten, unspoken, unacknowledged - the "invisible" - expectation is that they should succeed in a way that those who are not white should not. The outrage and racist resentment they feel when confronted with meritocracy's failure is a measure of their investment in whiteness and the protection they expect it to afford - their belief in their own white superiority. In his discussion of anger in Book II of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle asserted that "A man expects to be specially respected by his inferiors in birth, in capacity, in goodness, and generally in anything in which he is much their superior," [1378b-79a] implying that anger increases against those we perceive as below us in the social order. If Aristotle is correct, then anger will function as an important marker of whiteness, as the emotion can be linked to the feelings of entitlement and superiority that whiteness engenders.

Critical pedagogues are familiar with the emotional classroom "crises" that can ensue when privilege is confronted, and we often find these situations as uncomfortable as our students. As highly emotionally charged as these moments are, we perhaps pay less attention to the affective aspects than we should, seeking instead to navigate *around* rather than *through* the emotional discourse as though it were the unfortunate side effect of our inquiry rather than part of the inquiry itself. My contention is that charting emotions can help make visible cultural investments in whiteness and that such work is fundamental to equipping our students with the rhetorical tools they need to understand the discourses that interpellate them. I am arguing here for a political conception of emotion that "should address how to incorporate and educate the emotional capacities of citizens" (Koziak 5). Indeed Janine Jones argues that "goodwill whites" may be deficient in "Their capacity for a certain type of understanding . . . the type of understanding necessary for navigating a world that includes more members than one's self" (66). Certainly a crucial first step in such a project of remediation would be the identification of those "capacities"; to become aware of how emotion shapes and is shaped through the public sphere and how, through emotion, we effect social participation in "common" discourses.

In part such a politics would entail analyses of what Koziak calls "scenarios of emotion" (27) that trigger particular cultural responses of emotion. If, for example, we accept Toni Morrison's interpretation of Cardinal's breakdown as the projection of unnamed whiteness, our understanding of the episode then is in keeping with contemporary understandings of trauma where an event such as the Holocaust is not merely psychological and private, an individual's own personal affair, but social and historical and locatable in a larger cultural landscape.⁶ From this perspective, learning to "read" emotional whiteness can reveal to us the often disguised discursive social constructions of whiteness and help us understand the ways in which our emotional responses are imbricated in those constructions. In order to demonstrate the implications of this idea, I offer a reading of an excerpt

from an electronic threaded discussion held by students in a composition class. In my reading, I suggest that we can see the emotions of whiteness at work in shaping a student's political analysis. While the scenario here is clearly more mundane than Marie Cardinal's dramatic breakdown, the emotions exhibited are, I believe, nonetheless reliable indicators of the role that the rhetoric of whiteness plays in determining the student's response.

The assignment required students to discuss, in an electronic forum, a New York Times piece (Verhovek) that described the firing of two women from a small Texas insurance agency for their refusal to sign a pledge to speak only English at the office. Ironically, the women had been hired for their bilingual abilities to service Spanish-speaking customers. The women were chicanas, and the owner of the agency, who took the extreme measure of drawing up the pledge, was Anglo. He wanted them to speak Spanish only to Spanish-speaking customers but otherwise use English when conversing with each other, since he and most of the employees only spoke English. The agency owner is depicted as something of an anachronistic buffoon. He is quoted as saying he took two years of Spanish in high school but doesn't remember any of it, and he makes statements such as "That's one smart Mexican gal" in reference to a chicana worker who agreed to his terms and signed his pledge.

I asked students to identify and discuss what they thought were the important issues raised in the scenario as described in the news article. Many of them, including the student Joe, whose response appears below, configured the controversy in terms of an employer's rights, choosing to ignore the political discussion of linguistic hegemony that the author of the article raised as he included opinions from local residents suggesting the owner of the insurance agency should learn Spanish. Joe references that section of the article in his contribution to the discussion:

I also agree with the boss. If it is his business and he asks a simple request to speak english on the job, unless it's necessary to speak spanish with a customer, then i think there is nothing wrong with that. It is his place of business and that is how he wants it to be run. By simply asking them to not speak Spanish on the job he isn't violating any rights of their's, especially if they know how to speak English fluently. They are making it as if he said they cant speak Spanish EVER AGAIN NO MATTER WHERE THEY ARE! But no, he just asked them for HIS business, when they are working. Also, what really made me mad was at the end of the article when her fiance' Wayne Collins said, "It's a free country, so i think they should be able to speak whatever language they want. And if it really bothers the guy that much that he doesn't understand it, then maybe he should learn Spanish. I mean he could take a class or something." What the hell is that. I'm sorry but we are in America, and it's HIS business! Why should he have to learn a second language to suite his employees when they are more than able to ablige his request. God forbid that if they didnt

know English fluently and he asked them to take english classes, this whole situation would be ten times worse!

Although couched in what might be called a race or ethnic "neutral" argument about an employer's right to run his own business as he sees fit, the emotions that the student feels and expresses point to a submerged discourse of whiteness that the student rightly perceives, at least on an emotional level, as being under attack. I am not suggesting that Joe's argument about the owner's rights is a dodge. Indeed, the rhetoric of "color-blind" rights itself is often strongly linked to white privilege. But the student's anger and indignation may exceed the issue he is able to name. After all, Joe, who was not a contentious person but fairly mild-mannered, had heard other opinions that he didn't necessarily agree with throughout the course of the semester, but none had produced such a strong response in him. His vehemence continued during class discussion, and when I asked him why this issue made him so angry when others had not, he expressed confusion over his feelings, acknowledging that he didn't quite understand the strength of his reaction.

It's certainly possible that Joe could be feigning ignorance of his affective capacities - that is to say he knows, or rather he is aware of, the cognitive dimension of his emotional response that underscores, as Seibel-Trainor puts it, the investment he has in protecting his socioeconomic interest through the discourse of whiteness. Nussbaum, for example, tells us that Aristotle's conception of anger, and emotion in general, contains this cognitive dimension - in order to *feel* anger one must *think* a wrong has occurred (80). But it seems to me equally possible that Joe doesn't understand the emotions that link his indignation with what he sees as an affront to the boss's authority and to Joe's statement: "this is America." From a rhetoric of logic this statement would seem out of place in an argument defending the employer's demands; we might expect to see such a statement invoked to defend employees' rights to free speech rather than to justify an employer's rights to curtail expression. But of course rhetorically the statement is understandable, and it becomes so when we factor in the "emotional logic" that erupts when white privilege is questioned, that is to say when we understand whiteness from Aristotle's "recognition that all practical reasoning is pathetic reasoning" (Walker 91).

The statement "This is America" functions here as an enthymeme of whiteness in its reliance on an audience's understanding of the phrase's cultural resonance. As Walker points out, the shared premises in the Aristotelian enthymeme are inherently pathos-based (91). In this instance, the line "This is America" is not shorthand for liberty and freedom but rather Anglo hegemony in the expectation that English is the language of a white America. "This is America" means this is the Anglo America that the insurance agency owner - and Joe - have come to rely on. Any analysis of Joe's statement must take into account

its emotional rhetoric - and not because one couldn't make the argument that there is something efficacious in people speaking a common public language. Certainly one could. But the trail of emotion is pivotal here in understanding the rhetorical situation. Joe's anger shows that he is not so much arguing efficacy as his investment in the notion that the English he speaks as a white American cannot, from his point of interest, be marginalized. This is an emotional cultural rhetoric that he understands and in which he can participate. In turn, this rhetoric shapes what is possible in his political assessment. So while the emotional scenario *reveals* to us an episode of whiteness, importantly we find also a complex interweaving of thought and emotion that *produces* whiteness and allows for the agent's participation through it and maintenance of it in emotional discourse. Such a process, similarly, can account for students' rallying to the defense of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* against Achebe's claim that the book cannot, because of its racism, be considered a great work of art. Responding to the logic of whiteness's "emotionology,"⁷ these students are unable to "hear" Achebe's argument, for as Aristotle understood, albeit begrudgingly according to Jeffrey Walker, "logos cannot 'command' or compel emotion . . . a state of emotion once aroused will strongly determine how [the mind] perceives and interprets any 'premises' presented to it" (81).

Emotion as Ethics and a Theory of Recognition

In the above-mentioned essay, "An Image of Africa," Achebe focuses our attention on the scene where Conrad's Marlow looks at the dead helmsman and sees in him the "claim of distant kinship" (1451). For Achebe this is a pivotal scene and damning example of the ethical failure of the political liberalism that disallows the equality between European and African. Instead such a worldview weakly posits the possibility of a nebulous *connection* derived from notions of nineteenth century Primitivism. The "kinship" that Conrad's prose references here then is mere euphemism from Achebe's perspective. But is the idea of kinship and its possibility more powerful than Achebe, or Conrad for that matter, credits? For Achebe's argument highlights the uncanny reaction that Marlow has to the helmsman's gaze, as Marlow retains it in his memory: a haunting reminder of some connection he is unwilling and unable to understand. Really, then, the helmsman's death is not for Marlow, who remains steeped in his whiteness, a moment of true "kinship" recognition. It is, rather, a distinct and persistent failure of that recognition. He cannot find kinship in the Other, so Marlow, if not Conrad too, fails - emotionally and, thus, ethically.

I use this scene, which is steeped in images of kinship and recognition, to introduce a discussion of the ethical dimension of emotional rhetoric and to suggest a possible paradigm for thinking about the cultivation of emotional capacities for the purposes of creating social change. To do so, I rely here on

Barbara Koziak's work with what she calls the retrieval of a political model of emotion as a corrective to political theories where, "The disregard of emotion has perpetuated certain strands of liberal theory and explanatory political science that rely on the universality of [mere] self-interest" (4). According to Koziak "the issue of political emotion has been least conceptualized and analyzed" (123-24), and she asks the question, "Is there any account of political life that pays equal respect to reason and emotion and reconsiders the idea of a strict dichotomy between the two?" (2). Aristotle, she tells us, provides the basis for such an account to move beyond rational self-interest based models, those same models that Sleeter sees at work in the perpetuation of whiteness where white people reveal their rational investments in maintaining the status quo and thus have no incentive to change. Does factoring emotion into our political rendering of whiteness make the possibility for change any less bleak than Sleeter implies?

Building on Nussbaum's work regarding the cognitive and rational dimensions of emotion, Koziak asserts that for Aristotle "The acceptance of a moral idea requires both our rational and our emotional faculties" (105). By considering Aristotle's body of work (as well as non-Aristotelian occurrences of the word), Koziak arrives at an expanded understanding of the Greek concept of *thumos*, which has often been associated with notions of anger, spiritedness, and masculinity. She argues for a broader understanding of *thumos* as "a name for the characteristic emotional response of citizens for one another, one that is inculcated by laws, by the way of life of the regime, and by the regime's cultural production" (127) or, more succinctly, "the name for the capacity to feel emotion" (100). She concludes from this that "Aristotle . . . contends that both *thumos* and *logos* are necessary to political activity" (31). Thus emotions are a key component in the political and social life of the citizenry and must be accordingly attended to in any political or rhetorical theory.

This idea suggests that whiteness, or any inherently unethical discourse, is not reducible to an "irrationality" that can be fixed with logic nor is it simply a rational investment in a group's socioeconomic interests. As a political response, it involves a more complicated amalgamation of emotions that then must be understood and addressed from a perspective that accounts for rather than dismisses this complexity. Koziak's attempt to retrieve a politics of emotion takes her to a reconsideration of Aristotle's tragedy theory, specifically the concept of recognition, the dilemma of which I see illustrated in the "scenario of emotion" replicated in the helmsman scene of *Heart of Darkness*. In the tragedy theory, Koziak sees Aristotle establishing a salient model for locating the political in the emotional sphere and inculcating what she understands to be one of Aristotle's goals: the cultivation of moral emotional dispositions that help inform rational thought.

Rather than focusing on *Oedipus*, Koziak draws out the moral implications

of recognition as it is linked to pity by turning to Aristotle's discussion of *Iphigenia*, where Orestes and his sister must struggle to transcend their self-absorption and recognize their kinship. She claims that the *hamartia* in this case is "the failure to recognize the kin in the stranger" (149). But the

characters 'undergo' a recognition. . . . They are seized by events, seized in a moment of shock when they suddenly know their relation to a stranger, know the story of their own lives. Characters become spectators, seeing the life they have led for the first time. The former story of their lives is revealed as false; now they can proceed on the truth of their relationships, their acknowledgement of kinship. (140)

Thus she concludes that "the *thumos* of good Aristotelian citizens, that is, their emotional capacities, should be shaped to feel pity, meaning specifically to feel a kinship with citizens and strangers" (149-50). Koziak's take on Aristotle is that the citizenry's moral disposition is in its very nature deeply emotional and, importantly, educable.

While Koziak's treatment of tragedy focuses on recognition, Jeffrey Walker's explanation of Aristotle's *katharsis* in relation to emotional rhetoric lends further credence to Koziak's understanding of Aristotle's moral project. Walker notes that in *Politics* 8.7 Aristotle makes clear that "he is using the term *katharsis* in a special, unusual way" (77) and argues that emotional *katharsis*, differing from the medical model of purging, is better understood as being "put into a state" and that "this 'state' is expressed behaviorally and physically as a particular type of *pathos*" (78). This idea of *katharsis* as an *evoking* (rather than expurgation) of a particular emotional state implies an ethics of emotion where "we begin to think of rhetoric as an art of shaping and guiding an audience's *pathe* toward a *katharsis* of particular moods/intentionalities in practical judgments/actions" (85) and to "promote *katharsis* of more reasonable, 'ethical' moods more suitable to prudent choice and action" (91).

Meeting the objections that Jessie Daniels made to *logos*-based models of eradicating whiteness would seem to require us to move in the direction of the Aristotelian conception of emotion that Koziak and Walker envision. In order to transcend their whiteness, white people cannot merely be "told" about their whiteness; that is, "it will never be sufficient for the rhetor merely to *declare* the premises" (Walker 85, emphasis added). Rather we must be "seized by events." At first glance, such a theory of political emotion might appear to move us in the direction of the liberal sympathy and rhetoric of "tolerance" that have so paralyzed the political project of multiculturalism; the kind of sympathy that Achebe derides, as it produces little more than the condescension of the uninterrogated white man's burden while failing to pose any significant challenge to whiteness's oppressive "mystery."

But recognition, as Koziak has explicated it, is quite different from this sort of sympathy. Koziak, echoing the dire *empathy*⁸ of Cicero's "stress of deep

emotion and indignation," uses the words "seize" and "shock" to describe what amounts to an epiphanic insight where participants achieve an ironic distance from their own lives, forever altering their ontological relationships. Such a description suggests a crisis model of political emotion that relies on inducing the desired recognition, similar to what Shoshana Felman describes, in her teaching of holocaust narratives, as the movement from "cognition" to "performative" understanding (56). What would constitute such crisis is an important issue for emotional education to address. If we accept Achebe's argument regarding the helmsman scene in *Heart of Darkness*, not even the dead man beside Marlow can cause this character to be "seized by events" in order to "undergo" recognition of kinship. But perhaps it can be argued that there is the beginning of "crisis" for Marlow in this scene. Certainly it is in this moment that Conrad has Marlow coming the closest to achieving emotional, and thus political, understanding of, and change in, his white identity.

Importantly the main thrust of Achebe's critique is to point out just how easily narratives of whiteness end up re-centering themselves at the expense of marginalizing the Other, even as they may attempt to indict that very whiteness. This danger is quite real, as we see in Jill Swiencicki's discussion of what she calls "awareness narratives," in which white people, through autobiographical storytelling, purport to achieve critical recognition of their whiteness with life-changing consequences. When, to use Swiencicki's distinction, do narratives of *guilt* become the worldview altering narratives of *shame* that move beyond liberal sympathy to achieve what is, by definition, the radical recognition that Koziak sees Aristotle modeling for us as the basis for political emotion? For as Swiencicki reminds us in her exploration of the critical potential of narrative to disrupt whiteness, guilt may be uselessly paralyzing to the agent, but shame can produce the existential self-consciousness necessary for the development of a renewed ethical relationship to the world.

Conclusion: Towards a Pedagogy of Empathy and Recognition

Can crisis be used productively without alienating those very citizens in whom we wish to cultivate moral emotional capacities? This is an important question with regard to implementing a rhetoric of political emotion and one which teachers of critical pedagogy must attend to and frequently negotiate. As Fishman and McCarthy have noted, a case can be made as well for non-confrontational pedagogical models that work towards psychological and political transformation. The emotions that produce pleasure no doubt must be considered alongside those that produce pain as we explore what constitutes "the emotional repertoire of citizens" (Koziak 149). Seibel-Trainor observes that critical pedagogues' efforts to effect social change through teaching, particularly with respect to whiteness, "are compromised by (in part because they are predicated on) the moral necessity

of excluding the very [white] students whom, arguably, we most need to reach" (636). This tendency towards exclusion can be linked to critical pedagogy's over-reliance on a persuasion of *logos*, and perhaps a fear of "personalizing" the politics necessary for social transformation, as we find our attempts to reason students out of their whiteness frustrated again and again. In her call to move "from liberation to love" (647 emphasis added) of such students who have become "unlovable" to us because of their political views and moral positions, Seibel-Trainor is in essence arguing for an affective correction to logocentric epistemologies as well as pointing us towards other emotions that need to be studied and considered to develop a rhetoric of political emotion. No doubt we must also recognize the "kin in the stranger" of our students if we are to be effective in helping them through a process of recognition.

The broader questions we might ask are: what emotional responses are necessary to produce the radical recognition required for meaningful transformation and social change and what might a pedagogy look like that fosters such emotions for this purpose? In her discussion of the jurors in the Rodney King case and other public responses to that defining cultural event, Janine Jones attributes the jurors' verdict (as well as larger public response from the white-identified community) to a failure of empathy (see note 8), a failure that resulted from an inability or unwillingness to form an emotional response to the beating and instead to rely "on the physical evidence" (77). Jones asks whether the lack of affect in such objective, "rational" responses doesn't constitute "a kind of irrationality" (66), albeit one with its own logic that shields the white person from "the considerable pain, guilt, and shame that might be elicited" when she sees "how she benefits from racism and perhaps serves as an active, intentional, though unconscious, participant in it" (69). In Jones's analysis, which rests on the complex interdependence of emotion and reason, the failure to empathize precludes the possibility of recognition that would produce ethical responses. The tragedy of Rodney King then becomes one of failed emotional education; the *hamartia*, as Koziak might put it, was the failure to cultivate an emotional capacity that would allow for the ethical recognition of kinship on the part of the white jurors. This idea suggests that we cannot afford to shield either ourselves or our students from the emotional responses necessary to produce fully educated citizens. If recognition is to occur - finding the kin in the stranger - it must happen *through* emotional response rather than by the intellectual evisceration of it.

Jones's explanation of how critical empathy happens is again instructive in this regard as she cites scholarship that explains the achievement of such empathy as a process of "mapping the structure of an experience (where specific emotional content is part of the structure) onto the structure of an experience of the individual with whom we seek to empathize" (71). Among the reasons such mapping may fail to occur is the question of motive, the question with which

this article began. White people cannot achieve empathy and thus recognition because they do not wish to when the change that such recognition produces works against the maintenance of their own hegemonic interests. But a rhetoric and pedagogy of emotion might lead us to ask, as Jones does, not just about the cognitive, or "rational," dimension of emotion that Nussbaum attributes to Aristotle, where every emotion requires a belief, but rather the reverse. Thus, "instead of asking what happens to an emotion if you remove the belief that caused it . . . , we might ask what happens to a belief when you remove the emotion that caused it or is a component of it" (Jones 76-77). If we address the emotional dimension of whiteness - that is to say, if we view whiteness as a "problem" of emotional rhetoric - what happens to the *belief* in whiteness? The approach of inducing empathy-based recognition as a strategy for dismantling whiteness is one that poses the question in this way. And such strategies may help move the transformative potential of critical whiteness studies beyond the limitations of a rhetoric of rationality.

Notes

¹ Quoted in hooks ("Wings" 39).

² Despite its constructed quality, race can be described in ontological as well as epistemological terms. The philosopher John H. McClendon III makes this point when he argues:

What if we think of race in reference to it being a social category? We thereby uncover that its ontological basis is not the product of nature and instead is linked to social reality. What about other forms of socially derived phenomena, commonly studied by the social sciences? Being in nature does not limit the boundaries of reality. Social reality, though distinct from natural reality, is nevertheless real. Race derives its ontological status from social reality. (213-14)

While I would maintain that the relationship between the "social" and the "natural" is more dialectical than it is "distinct" (see Seshadri-Crook's discussion of the interplay of biology and racialization 11-20), McClendon's assertion, derived from David Theo Goldberg's work, is useful in countering reactionary appropriation of critical race theory's insights into the "fiction" of race for the purposes of reasserting white hegemony. If race itself is not "real," the argument goes, then racism too cannot exist. Granting race ontological status underscores that while race is a social category with epistemological status, the material effects of *racism* are quite "real."

³ Daniels makes this observation in her review of two books that attempt to plumb the depths of whiteness: *White Racism* by Joe R. Feagin and Hernan Vera; *Memoir of a Race Traitor* by Mab Segrest.

⁴ Although Critical Race Theory began as a movement within legal studies, it "has had a galvanizing effect not only within the narrow world of legal academia, but also on the public discourse on race more generally." Critical Race Theory attempts to "expose and dismantle [the normative supremacy of whiteness in American law and society] . . . from an explicitly race-conscious and critical 'outsider' perspective" (Valdes, et. al. 1).

⁵ Katula explains that no such ethical dilemma would have existed in the duty-based, public spirit-oriented rhetoric of Quintilian's "good man speaking well" if emotional appeal were used to achieve what is best for the community.

⁶ See, for example, Cathy Caruth's socially-inflected understanding of trauma.

⁷ Stearns and Stearns use the term "emotionology" to distinguish cultural standards of emotion from merely individual experiences of it.

⁸ See Jones's discussion of sympathy versus empathy, in which the former is described as "our awareness and participation in suffering" and the latter as "our ability to comprehend mental states of another" (67-8).

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